

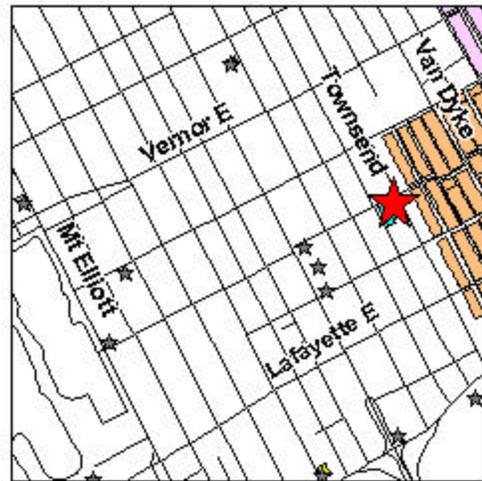
St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Parish Complex

1515 and 1401 Baldwin, 1480 Townsend.

Local	v	6/20/86
State	v	
State Marker		
National	v	6/9/89



St. Charles Church



Historic overview:

The Roman Catholic Parish of St. Charles Borromeo was a focal point of a late 19th century Belgian community in near-east Detroit. Flemish missionaries began arriving in the 1830's and in the late 1850's families started arriving and settling in the area around Gratiot and Baldwin. As the Belgian settlement moved eastward, St. Charles Borromeo parish was established in 1886. Their first church was a small frame building built by the parishioners. In 1889 the church became too small for its congregation and the building was sawed in two and a new 20' section was built between the two ends. The parish now represented French, Belgians, Germans, Irish Scots and English and continued expanding well after the turn of the century. In 1911 it had 800 members and by 1920 there were over 3000, mostly American born.

With its growing congregation and the past discrepancies over ownership of the land finally settled by the Pope, a new church was to be built. In 1918 Peter Dederichs won a competition and the contract was awarded to build an "edifice of Romanesque style for religious use". Dederichs built many churches throughout his career in the U. S. and Canada, starting and ending with churches built in Detroit. He was a life long resident of Detroit. The church was built in the early Renaissance-Romanesque style with red-brown tapestry brick. The foundation and trimmings are smooth white Bedford stone. The church, built in the Latin Cross plan, measures 92' across the front and 180' in depth. Its main altar is Baroque in style. Some of the stained glass windows throughout the church have been attributed to the Daprato Studios of Chicago and New York. The organ was built in two sections to not block the view of the rose window over the main entrance. The architectural firm of Van Leyen & Schilling designed the two-story rectory and the two-story school in 1912.

The church is still used today by a changing congregation. The rectory serves its original function and the school is leased to the Church of Messiah.

